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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 003569

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/12/2018

TAGS: PGOV PREL SA IZ

SUBJECT: SHEIKH CLAIMS IRAQI TRIBES ASKING SAUDIS FOR SUPPORT

REF: A. BAGHDAD 2857

¶B. BAGHDAD

¶C. 2595

Classified By: Senior Advisor Gordon Gray for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) In a November 10 meeting, Muthanna tribal sheikh Hakim Khazal Khashan repeated his claims to Senior Advisor Gordon Gray that he is working with Anbar sheikh Abu Risha to develop a common platform for tribal parties running in the provincial elections. (See reftels for background.) Hakim repeated his pitch for direct U.S. support to his fledgling party and admonished Americans for allowing religious parties to gain strength relative to nationalist, liberal, and tribal entities that would be more supportive of our policies.

¶2. (C) While lamenting the lack of U.S. support, Hakim claimed that both he and Abu Risha had separately been in contact with Saudi intelligence chief Prince Muqrin. While Hakim said he is not receiving support from the Saudis, he surmised that Abu Risha probably does receive funds. Hakim, who seemed less than enthusiastic about his party's chances in the provincial elections, said that a tribal gathering will be organized in Ramadi in December (on a date not yet set) to further organize nationwide cross-sectarian tribal efforts in the provincial elections.

CROCKER